

Several Opinions About Our Church Name.

I am at the end of my wits on the G. B., name movement. We are incorporated under the name "Brethren," and I doubt whether the G. B.'s, can incorporate under the same name. Legally they can not be Brethren unless they put a handle to it. This is my impression. I may mistake. I see nothing that we can do if they change and do not incorporate, which they will not do. Several years ago they claimed the name "Brethren," and became indignant when we took it. Now they are reaching out for what they then claimed as theirs. It will make confusion no doubt if they change. Hope they may not.

A. A. COBER.

In relation to the "name" I would say, I hav'n't any fears that the G. B.'s will adopt exactly our name, and as long as they have something prefixed or affixed to Brethren, it will not make any material difference. I would not favor the idea of hunting another name until we are actually compelled to do so, and in such event I would suggest that we would be very careful to select a strictly Bible name. If we must have another name let's have "Christian Brethren." This is a double name of course, but I don't think it will kill us to wear it. Still I would much rather retain the name "Brethren" alone.

The G. B.'s may fail to get this thing accomplished this time, (which I believe they will, for they must always wrangle over a resolution two or three years before they can pass it.)

J. H. SWIHART.

Religiously there is much in a name. Christ said, "One is your father and all ye are brethren." The apostle calls Christ "our elder brother." The terms brother and sister are applied to the members constituting the same family, and bearing the same family name and in order to obtain that inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. Reserved in heaven, for the children of God or God's family they must be able to identify themselves as belonging to the family and bear a name that shows the family relationship. The name "Brethren Church," evidently shows that relationship, and is not only expressive of this relationship, but is a scriptural name and one which we dearly love. The writer some fifteen years ago positively refused to sign a certificate of membership to be sent to another congregation because it was to recommend the person holding the same to the German Baptist Church. The name Brethren and Brethren Church, was our church name—see writings of Alexander Mack.

As this brotherhood increased in number it became evident that some who called themselves children of this family became dissatisfied with the endearing family name, and assumed another and not only this but made an effort to have the entire family to agree to the professed change of name. Some did consent to this departure from the family name, and from that time on innovations and departures from not only the name but from our avowed creed, the Gospel of

Christ. During all the period of time from our first organization in 1708, many of our brethren clung to the endearing name and creed. That accounts for the name Brethren being attached to so many books, publications and writings.

Some of those who were loyal to the avowed creed of our early "Brethren church," and who would not and could not be bound with human laws and mandates met at Ashtland, Ohio, and then and there did (not organize a new church) but reaffirmed the doctrine and principles as held by our primitive Brethren and apostolic churches, refusing to be governed by any creed but that accepted, and adopted by our Brethren in 1708. In 1883, many of those alluded to with many others met at Dayton, Ohio, at which time we reaffirmed our church name, as held by our early church fathers, and as such are an incorporated body, and are legally and biblically the Brethren church, and as such the laws of our commonwealth under which we have become incorporated will protect us, and the name we love and have reaffirmed.

Dear brethren and sisters do not become alarmed at the movement of the German Baptists. They now have and must have a handle for their ANNUAL MEETING BROAD-AX, and it makes no difference as to which side they attach their handle, the ax will be all the same.

If the "German Baptist church," will assume the name "Brethren church," as we now stand incorporated, it is only farther evidence that they have not been that church and that they are following after us, but only a little too late to be the original Brethren church that had no creed but the Bible.

J. B. WAMPLER.

Blanco, Pa., May 13th, 1888.

In conversation with a prominent member of the German Baptist church, I was told there was a positive movement on foot to get that body to adopt the name of "Brethren" at the coming annual conference. Should this be accomplished, what, under the circumstances, would be the best for us to do? This question is forced upon us. It will never do for two denominations with different platforms and so far apart as we are to bring about confusion by having the same name. Whatever we do in the matter should be done deliberately and wisely, remembering that the welfare and honor of the church is at stake. The cause of Christianity has often suffered from the staunchest friends, who have hastily, and without using proper forethought, transacted important business, and even some that was not quite so important. Trivial matters left undone or unwisely done, have become important through the disastrous results that have followed.

Then what shall we do? The matter is of vastly more importance than at first sight we will permit ourselves to think it is. When in the heat of the battle a few of us were struggling to throw off the yoke of religious serfdom that galled the soul, and full of enthusiasm for the grand task we had undertaken, it would be the greatest marvel of the ages if we had not made a few blunders. Some of us can remember the feelings that caused our hearts to swell and ebb with fear and hope, as we met in the city of Dayton just five years ago. In all the events that make up the history of the world, the occasions that caused men to meet for a similar purpose and under similar cir-

cumstances are very very few. So few are they, and so vast has been the result of that which at the time was considered trivial, that they are now chronicled with care, and are looked upon as the landmarks of the world's progress in the cause of liberty. When, then, under the circumstances, we find that we made a mistake, should we, who were not afraid to stand up in defence of right and truth, and boldly oppose oppression and error, even against an overwhelming majority, and at the terrible cost not only of financial loss, but of severing the dearest and tenderest ties that bind together the hearts of the human family,—should we then, I ask, be too cowardly to now undo that which under the test of time has proved a mistake, or to amend what has been done so that greater good can be accomplished?

Let us look at the matter as it is. At our first general conference, after what we then thought was mature deliberation, we concluded to call ourselves "The Brethren Church." As I was a strong, if not the first, advocate of the name adopted, I can well remember the reasons advanced in its favor. There were representatives of the several bodies that had emanated from the old church, therefore it was urged that all distinctive appellations should be dropped, and that we unite as the Brethren Church. Another strong argument was that we were the only true representatives of the old church organized by Mack and others; also that the G. B. church had really deviated from the old paths and could no longer be identified as the old church. But we are all too well acquainted with these facts to rehearse them here. The question is, after having five years experience, can we say that we then did the best thing in that matter that could have been done. Many of us say "No." And since the G. B.'s contemplate adopting that name, it is time for us to reconsider the matter. We cannot change them from their purpose. Neither will it do us any good to denounce or try them, but what shall we do? is the question.

I remember that it was urged at Dayton that by adopting the name Brethren, we would be able to gain and retain some property that we thought otherwise we could never get. That, however, has proved a failure. Adopting the name has had little or no influence in bringing about a decision in our favor where the title to property was disputed in the courts.

So another question looms up. Are we really, considering everything, entitled to the name? As our editor told you last week, virtually they have long owned and used the name, although probably from a legal standpoint it is doubtful whether they were entitled to it. But we should not forget that we are followers of Jesus. We may make much ado about our "rights" but are we consistent in our present attitude. The doctrines of Jesus teach us that we are to be meek; and self-denial and non-resistant, are characteristics of his followers. To confine the interpretation of non-resistance to pistols, cannons and swords is neither wise, reasonable nor Gospel. It should spread out and reach down to every avenue of life. It should enter into the principle taught by Jesus, when we are asked to go a mile, we should go two; when one takes our coat, let us give our cloak also. This interpretation of the principle would reach down even to the church name.

The question at present puts itself in this shape: Have we, as a band of professing Christians, any right to a name that has long been assumed, if not formally taken, by another church? From a selfish, grasping, worldly view, the answer might be "Yes." The cause has been disgraced more than once by disputes over church property. We would no longer be governed by the rules of the

old church, therefore we cannot be recognized as part of them. There has been a great deal more running after German Baptistism and its Annual Meeting customs than has been healthy for our church, then why have any more of it? I cannot consider it right to dispute with them over a name that they could prove they have used for many years. The name is theirs,—they used it first, they want it and so let them have it. It will be more Christian and manly in us to meet and adopt another name than to dispute over this. There are some other things that are theirs. They originated them and they ought to have them copyrighted so as to prevent us from infringing upon their rights of patent. They should have the exclusive right to these innovations, and as Gospel-alone people we have no right to use them.

Besides all this, I find that the name Brethren often confuses people as to our identity. I see now what I did not see five years ago, that it is almost impossible to get people to recognize us properly. It would have been much better for us had we taken "Progressive" or some other appropriate word to qualify "Brethren." Therefore, I move that some steps that may be agreed upon as the most practical, be at once taken to change our name, and give us our proper standing before the world, and let the German Baptists have their name in peace.

EDWARD MASON.

The Sad, Dark Days.

Sometime in the life of everyone when the burden and heat of the day becomes more than usually crushing, a piteous cry comes welling up from the weary heart,

"My life is sad and cold and dreary, It rains, and the rain is never weary."

The sad refrain of a saddened heart; a heart that has felt sorrows and disappointments and failures. The weary echo of a weary struggle; a struggle against the foes within and the foes without; the inward foes of self-love, pride, ambition or an unsubdued spirit; the outward foes of jealousy, contention, slander and disaster.

To none other more than to the Christian comes these sad, dark days. In the warfare against sin and sin's dominions, the heart grows weary in the strife, the brain becomes worn and faint and giddy, the soul grows sick with horror and despair as it comprehends all the evil forces brought to bear against it; the forces of hatred, malice, envy, misconceptions, inconsistencies, narrow mindedness, vulgar opinions, false judgments, etc., till at last as misfortunes and afflictions and disasters multiply themselves and nearly crush the God-given spirit of truth, the writhing soul cries out in anguish, "How long, O Lord, how long!"

And alas! How much harder are these misfortunes to bear when brought about by the Pharisee who says with his lips, "I love the Lord my God," and with his heart is serving Satan: the false pretender who goes regularly to church, bows devoutly in prayer, and then proceeds to fit the prayers and the sermon to the feet of his neighbors; the hypocrite who considers himself sanctified, but is not so far removed from the earthly as to be unable to detect the frailties of others and to pass judgment upon them.

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion and speak evil of dignities." "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

All are looking forward to a brighter something beyond—financial prosperity or an increased source of happiness. Through vistas of coming years we catch brief glimpses of a serene contentment, of a broadened sphere of usefulness. Sometimes the way seems so dark that we can only grope blindly and stumblingly, scarcely realizing the path our feet are treading. Sometimes the goal seems so nearly unreachably that we dare not measure the distance. Sometimes our castles are overthrown by one in slow succession; but oftentimes all go down together as a ship sinks and is forever gone. Our visions of happiness and prosperity of this world finally resolve themselves into what

they are—only dreams. When all our hopes are swallowed up in the abyss of despair, then it is we need the sustaining grace of God—the spirit of grace and supplication. Then it is we need the love of the crucified Christ in our hearts that we can look to him for strength and comfort. Then it is that we should

"Look in our agony upward to God. And kiss, while it smites us the chastening rod."

The saddened and chastened heart will acknowledge the decree of the Divine Judge and murmur, "Thy will be done." The professed follower of Christ who is determined to do God's work despite difficulties and discouragements, instead of spending a life of careless ease and indifference, is the one against whom will be hurled the poisonous dart of an unkind criticism. It has been from the remotest ages until now, and some of the really noble characters are but just beginning to emerge from the sea of opprobrium in which they have long been buried. If then restitution be only gained by such spirits in cycles of years, it can scarcely be wondered at that many should now spend their span of days unappreciated and totally misunderstood. Does any one, whose depths are stirred within him at sight of the prevailing sins and vices of the world, put forth the earnest endeavors of a noble nature to elevate his brethren? It is too true that Madam Grundy has her eyes upon him and can see that his efforts are but stepping stones to notoriety. Does a good man seek to do God's work in a quiet humble manner, with honesty and straightforward manliness, without display or pretense? The same evil dame can see a hidden motive in all his actions.

But the full and perfect consecration of a cultured mind and loving heart to the service of God, can scarcely end in failure. It cannot come at last to disappointment and blasted hopes, and balked ambition. The venom of slander, the poison of malice and the foul machinations of hidden foes, cannot take from a man all the good he does, nor nearly all of it. If he suffer martyrdom; if he suffer the crucifixion of his affections and of his heart's best impulses on the cruel cross made by envious hands; if he be tried in the fire of persecution and be only purified thereby; if through it all his soul rises superior to weakness, and endures calmly to the end, pure, true, steadfast, unwavering, then must his good deeds stand for him an everlasting monument to his nobility.

Realizing the precious promises of a loving God of a reward for the faithful we must not despair. When the clouds gather thickly and shut out the light, and our day is made dark by a dense atmosphere of severe trials and afflictions, and we almost fear we shall be crushed by the over-powering avalanche of sorrow, then can we turn with outstretched hands and bleeding heart to a merciful God, and find in him surcease from sorrow.

"Be still, sad heart, and cease repining, Behind the clouds is the sun still shining."

Thy fate is the common fate of all; Into each life some rain must fall, Some days must be sad and dreary."

Be faithful unto death and finally when the sadness and the brightness of this life is forever gone, we shall stand at the gate of Paradise, leaving behind and forgetting all the afflictions we have suffered. We shall enter in and rest.

HELEN FRAME.

South Bend, Ind.

The contents of the *Pearl of Days* maintain a high standard of excellency and steadily grows in popular favor. Its editorials are sprightly and pertinent. There is in each number a rich store of interesting and especially readable articles. The present number, May, contains a variety of thoughts bearing upon various aspects of the Sabbath question, and furnishing a fund of facts useful and important for all concerned in the advocacy of a right observance of the Sabbath. There is a marked degree of healthfulness in the tone and spirit of this choice magazine and in the home it will be not only a monitor but a benediction. Christian people ought by every means to extend its circulation by speaking of its merits and aiding its circulation. It has a special mission and is happily filling it. One dollar a year. Single copy 10 cents. *Wilbur E. Ketcham, Publisher, 71 Bible House, New York*

Such only can enjoy the country who are capable of thinking when they are there; then they are prepared for solitude, and in that case solitude is prepared for them.